**I-80 Sound Wall – v2 – updated 1/21/21**

**Background**

Back in April 2018, UDOT announced a possible reconstruction of the I-80 / I-215 interchange at the mouth of Parleys Canyon, to occur sometime after 2030. Let’s call this “The Big Project.” The details are available at [www.parleyseis.com](http://www.parleyseis.com). Because of the excessive freeway noise along the north edge of I-80 from 1700 East to the interchange, we launched a neighborhood campaign to get a sound wall included. Our attempts to obtain a sound wall failed primarily because the noise issues from 1700 East to 2300 East were specifically excluded from the UDOT Environmental Study, because the construction will not occur west of 2300 East. That project was recently approved, and the details are available at www.parleyseis.com.

However, as part of “The Big Project”, UDOT had studied the noise in our neighborhood and included their results in their preliminary report, even though they excluded it from their final report. In mid-2019 we conducted our own sound study (thank you Skip Greene and an acoustician Sarah Rollins who works with him) and compared it to the UDOT sound study for the “Big Project.” The measurements found that the noise was seriously underestimated for our portion of I-80 (north side, Parleys Interchange to 1700 East to 2300 East).

The 600 petitions from concerned neighbors were presented to UDOT and the legislature, and they have had a large impact. Thanks to wonderful support from and work by Doug Foxley, Brian King (our local state senator) and Jani Iwamoto (our local state representative), funding for a sound wall was included in a large transportation bill at the end of the 2020 legislative session. Then COVID hit, and all transportation funding is now up for reconsideration in the 2021 legislative session.

Somewhere in the middle of the past 2½ years that we have been working on this project, UDOT announced a separate but related project – an additional eastbound lane on the south edge of I-80 from 1300 East to 2300 East, scheduled to begin construction in late 2021 or early 2022. Let’s call this “The Little Project.” Since that announcement, we have focused our efforts on this one instead of “The Big Project.” This allows us to get them to include the portion of I-80 from 1700 East to 2300 East, which is where the noise problem is the worst and affects the largest number of people. So our efforts continue.

**Current status**

We are continuing to receive excellent support from Brian, Jani, Doug, Skip, and Sarah. In the fall of 2020 we were able to meet with Carlos Braceras (head of UDOT) and his key staff. They agreed to work with us in good faith to try to find a solution that is both “feasible” (science) and “reasonable” (economics). We have some creative ideas about how to solve the problem. For example, we have learned that a new next generation concrete grinding technique that can reduce the sound levels to levels that are similar to asphalt’s sound performance. For starters, we are asking UDOT to re-visit the sound study to resolve the differences between their study and ours. Once we and UDOT come up with an acoustically feasible solution, we will then tackle the problem of economics. Stay tuned!

If you have questions, feel free to contact John Bennion at 385-252-7774 (m) or johnbennion@yahoo.com.